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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

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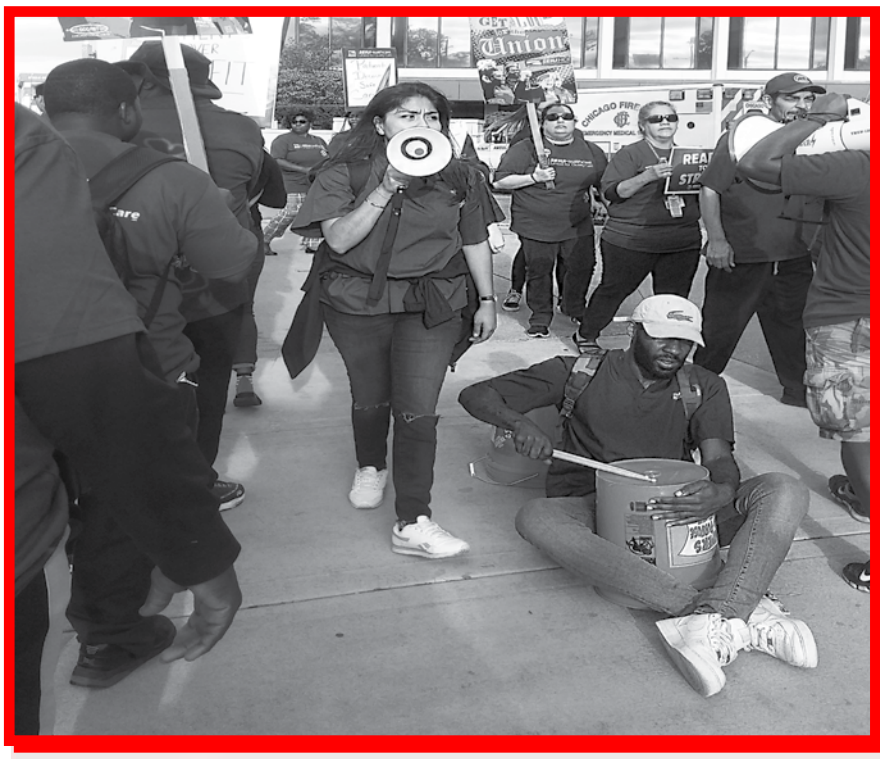
STRIKE WAVE!

SMASH THE BOSSES AND THEIR SYSTEM



The crisis of capitalism is catching up to the bosses. As the prospect for workers look gloomier, global military conflict and social inequality soar while wages and benefits stay stagnant, workers today are more likely to strike. "The number of people who participated in work stoppages involving over 1,000 workers rose last year to its highest level since the 1980s, buoyed by teacher walkouts and a multicity hotel workers strike" (NY Times, 9/16). There will be more strikes to come. With strikes come parasitic politicians of all colors of the political rainbow, ready to be out in the streets to get likes and votes. Though it is a dark night of class struggle, still workers will fight back. Progressive Labor Party is here to arm strikers with communist ideas and build an international Party for workers' power.

(top left) Across the Midwest and South, nearly 50,000 General Motors workers went on strike on September 16. They are constantly sold out and attacked by the bosses. The most recent example was when liberal then-president Barack Obama bailed out GM bosses at the expense of workers. Besides striking for jobs, workers need communist revolution (**see page 3**).

(top right) On September 20, over 2,000 registered nurses staged a one-day strike in front of the University of Chicago Medical Center. The hospital bosses, who have assets worth billions of dollars, have had over 1,700 staffing complaints filed against them since 2017 (CBS2 Chicago, 9/20). We say get rid of the capitalism altogether and organize medical workers to fight for communism and one day run the health care system. PLP was active in chanting, picketing, and selling CHALLENGE.

(bottom left) Hospital workers from Mount Sinai picket in front of the campus on Friday, September 13. Mostly Black, Latin and Asian workers are fighting back against racist and sexist working conditions at the trauma hospital. We need free, health care for all, and more importantly communism, where the working class has power and runs society. PLP was active in the rally and picket, leading chants, and distributing CHALLENGE and flyers.✪

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet
www.plp.org
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com
Twitter: @PLPchallenge
Facebook: Challenge Desafio

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Saudi and Iranian rivalry

U.S empire in peril

@PLPchallenge

Challenge Desafio

On September 14, Saudi Arabia's state-owned Abqaiq and Khurais oil processing plants were attacked by drone and missile strikes of unconfirmed origin, disrupting five percent of global oil production and pushing rival imperialists closer to World War III. The latest conflict in the Middle East demonstrates the deteriorating influence of a fractured U.S. ruling class. It also reminds us how the fight over resources among the world's competing capitalists leads to mass murder and displacement of workers.

Only by building an international revolutionary communist party, the Progressive Labor Party, can workers transform the next, inevitable, inter-imperialist war into the final class war against all bosses. Second to the labor power of the international working class, oil may be the rulers' most lucrative commodity. Under the profit system, competing capitalist super-powers have repeatedly clashed over control of oil profits in the Middle East. Meanwhile, the capitalist bosses in Iran, under the banner of the poisonous ideologies of religion and nationalism, are struggling to regain control over their own oil production.

Under communism, we will write a different story. The leadership of the international working class will determine the development of energy resources, based on workers' needs and the protection of the planet for future generations.

A changing world order

Since 2015, the criminal state terrorists of Saudi Arabia have been fighting the Iran-backed nationalist Houthi rebels in Yemen, a brutal conflict that has slaughtered an estimated 100,000 people, mostly civilians, through targeted airstrikes and epidemic famine and cholera (theguardian.com, 6/20). While the Houthis immediately took credit for the attacks, both the U.S. and Saudi bosses blamed Iran. In any case, the incident emboldens U.S. rivals and creates doubt among its allies. It reflects the U.S. bosses' loss of influence in the region.

The old liberal world order, dominated by the U.S. ruling class since World War II, is under siege. The two closest U.S. allies in continental Europe are hedging their bets. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, citing the atrocities in Yemen, is refusing to lift an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia (Bloomberg, 9/17). French President Emmanuel Macron, in defiance of U.S. sanctions, has proposed a $15 billion line of credit to Iran (New York Times, 9/5). Both Germany and France have opted to remain in the nuclear deal brokered by ex-U.S. President Barack Obama—and which President Donald Trump withdrew from last year.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin followed up on missile system sales to Iran and Turkey by offering a similar deal to Saudi Arabia (Reuters, 9/16). In June, Putin declared that Iran would not be alone if attacked. The Russian bosses are clearly willing to play both sides and ready to capitalize on U.S. weakness.

Divided U.S. empire in decline

The seeming confusion among the U.S. bosses is a result of competing factions within the ruling class. The main-wing finance capitalists, representing the big banks and multinational oil companies, are committed to maintaining U.S. control over the oil-rich Middle East—with ground troops, if necessary, as well as multilateral alliances with the rulers' historic allies. At the same time, the main-wing bosses realize they're not nearly prepared for an all-out war with China or Russia. First they'll need to force unity and discipline upon their own class; hence the looming impeachment of Trump. Then they'll need to build a mass patriotic, multiracial, fascist movement within the working class.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, an Obama appointee and outgoing chair of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently warned that a sustained conflict in the Middle East would require the U.S. to divert more forces to the region from the Pacific theater, where it's seeking to contain an ascending and expansionist China in the South China Sea and East China Sea. The main-wing bosses may need to keep their powder dry for a future conflict against their main rival for world dominance.

Meanwhile, the smaller domestic oil bosses, led by the Koch family and fronted by Trump and his Fortress America foreign policy, want to outsource the military policing of the Middle East to Saudi Arabia and Israel. They're against paying heavy taxes for a future ground war—or even maintaining multilateral alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). They'd prefer to rely instead on the U.S. nuclear threat and Air Force and Navy to protect their profits.

Despite some "locked and loaded" bluster early on, Trump was careful to downplay the prospect of war with Iran and indicated the U.S. would continue to rely on escalating economic sanctions. Four days before the attacks, Trump fired John Bolton, the "hard-power" national security advisor who'd pushed for military intervention against the Iranian regime. On September 20, Trump announced the deployment to the Persian Gulf of a token few hundred additional soldiers, on top of the 2,000 troops sent since June, along with air and missile defense equipment—a move that Defense Secretary Mark Esper characterized as "defensive" (npr.org, 9/20).

Imperialist war vs. communist revolution

Capitalist dictatorship—what the bosses call "liberal democracy"—means that millions of workers will continue to be killed or made into refugees by one crisis after the next. More than 70 million workers are currently displaced (UNHCR, 6/19). Three million have been forced to flee their homes in Yemen alone. This is the "collateral damage" of inter-imperialist rivalry. It's one of many reasons the profit system must be smashed.

Inter-imperialist war represents the highest level of competition among bosses. It also spells fascist terror for workers. The last two world wars exposed the capitalists' willingness to murder tens of millions of workers in their ruthless struggles over profit. But those wars also triggered two monumental communist revolutions, in the Soviet Union and then in China—the first times in history when the working class seized state power.

As communists in PLP, our historical task is to build on the foundation of those great class wars. Our role is to prepare workers throughout the world to break with nationalism and the bosses' lethal ideas. Our job is to organize a mass, international movement of millions and build for communist revolution. Join us!✪

Class struggle in full gear

Auto strike halts GM, needs to smash profit system

Striking workers halt truck from entering GM facility.

BOLINGBROOK, IL, SEPTEMBER 21—"You're not just fighting for you, you're fighting for us! For everybody!"

This statement of solidarity was made by a Chrysler autoworker who had traveled hours to support a picket of General Motors (GM) workers outside a company parts distribution plant in Bolingbrook, Illinois. More working-class support is essential as the autoworkers boldly continue their strike against the racist and sexist capitalist bosses, which began on September 15 and includes up to 50,000 workers.

Comrades from Progressive Labor Party (PLP) in the Chicago area traveled to the Bolingbrook plant to show solidarity and to spread revolutionary communist politics. We put forth the line that as workers we shouldn't have to beg for crumbs from the bosses. Nor put our confidence in capitalist liberal politicians and union sellouts to save us. It's the capitalist profit system that's the problem, and communist revolution and international workers' power is the solution!

Opportunistic politicians

Current Democratic Party candidates like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders are speaking out about the GM strike on their campaign trail to "court labour" and "in hopes of holding onto their support — and winning over those who flipped for President Trump in 2016" (NY Times, 9/22). While some workers have illusions about president Donald Trump's support for autoworkers, they shouldn't be fooled by the liberal politicians either.

At the heart of their reform, as represented by Warren and Sanders, is a desire to win workers to the long-term needs of a U.S. empire in decline, in the face of threats of rival imperialists China and Russia.

Workers report on horrid conditions

On the day of the strike a multiracial group of comrades arrived late in the morning to the picket, and were warmly received by 10 workers who

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STRIKERS MUST REJECT GM & UAW BOSSES

"We want equality!" That's how one worker described the strike of 50,000 GM workers, women and men, black, Latin, Asian, and white workers in the United Auto Workers (UAW) union. A big red salute to GM strikers. Their courage serves as an inspiration for workers everywhere. At least 12 strikers were arrested in Spring Hills, TN for attempting to stop car haulers from moving finished cars out of the company lot. From Michigan to-Texas strikers confronted the police, whose historical role has been to protect property and attack organized labor.

Capitalism is the antithesis of equality. A system rooted in exploitation cannot bear the fruits of equality. Only communism can cultivate a worker-run system that will eliminate racism, sexism, and nationalism. For that, workers need an international party, Progressive Labor Party.

Two-tier wage system

Seven percent of the 430,000-strong workforce is made up of temporary part-time workers (TPTs), who earn about $15 an hour, the same as the New York City minimum wage. They do the same work as fulltime workers. Meanwhile, GM CEO Mary Barra made $28 million last year.

GM wants to expand the use of TPTs, who are referred to as "in progression" workers that have not been accepted as fulltime even after working for 5 or more years. They work unpredictable schedules, cannot build seniority, and are subject to arbitrary discipline and firings without union protection, even though they pay union dues. It's a slave labor system. The strikers want them hired as full-time and the TPT classification ended!

Awash with record profits, they closed four plants, demand further concessions in order to cut costs by $4.5 billion by the end of 2020 and reduce capacity. "The strike could be costing GM $75 million-a-day, according to JPMorgan analysts" (Business Insider, 9/21). This reflects both the power that workers have collectively, and the level of exploitation under the racist profit system. "It's a staggering figure, but it pales in comparison to GM's whopping $26 billion in profits in 2018." (Business Insider).

This also points out the need to abolish wage slavery with communist revolution, where we will produce for the needs of the working class, not the profits of capitalists.

Capitalist competition hurts workers

GM is caught in the sharpening competition for cheap labor and markets as the global auto market heads into a systemic downturn. They have to reduce capacity and make big investments in electric cars or face extinction. It's also estimated that Trump's trade war with China has cost GM and Ford roughly $1 billion each in North America. Workers everywhere will pay a much higher price as the U.S. and China continue on a collision course to another world war.

UAW leadership in bed with bosses

The corruption of the UAW leaders is hanging over the strike like a toxic cloud. The UAW and Fiat-Chrysler executives were charged for a bribery scheme. UAW president Gary Jones and former president Dennis Williams are also the targets of a federal criminal complaint "in a conspiracy to embezzle more than $1 million of member dues and spend it on Palm Springs villas, steakhouse dinners, cigars, more than 100 rounds of golf and $400 bottles of Cristal Champagne" (Detroit News 9/18). UAW Region 5 Director Vance Pearson, who succeeded Jones as Regional Director, was recently arrested and charged with multiple counts of fraud, embezzlement and money laundering.

Nationalism is a capitalist idea

The unions in the U.S. are a shell of its former self. In the absence of a communist movement and the then-beacons of working-class power, Soviet Union and China, nationalism and reform consumed the unions. Decades of economist fights and patriotic, anti-worker slogans of "Buy American" have crippled working-class fightback. The union bosses serve to negotiate the exploitation of workers with the capitalists. These unions have in effect become ruling-class institutions.

On the other hand, there are 50,000 workers who are fighting back, following the strike wave of teachers, hotel, fast food, and Stop & Shop workers.

PLP supports the strike by going out to picket lines with whatever bosses' organization we are in: unions, schools, churches, community groups, hospitals, and transit. There is always a potential to turn strikes into schools for communist ideas and practices.

Workers want equality. Workers can build equality when we smash capitalism and build a dictatorship of the working class. Smash GM! Fight for communism! ✪

PLP and fighters call out racist liberal bosses

BALTIMORE, SEPTEMBER 10—As the weekly West Wednesday rallies continue to demand accountability for the murder of Tyrone West by twelve to fifteen Baltimore Police and a Morgan University officer, President Donald Trump spent most of a week tweeting that the city of Baltimore is a "disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess" where "no human being would want to live." This disgusting racism means, in his eyes, that the people of this majority-Black city are sub-human.

Two of the liberal bosses in Baltimore organized a statement by ten major capitalists and their allies – published as an op-ed in the local Sun newspaper – to seemingly defend Baltimore against Trump's venom. The article praised their large investment activities in the city as moving the city to ever-greater prosperity. A speaker from Progressive Labor Party at one of the West Wednesday rallies, pointed out that anti-racist organizers should not be misled into thinking that Trump's liberal opponents, those who signed the statement, are in any way our allies in the fight against racism.

Daniels, misleader # 1

One organizer of the newspaper statement, Ron Daniels, is the President of Johns Hopkins University. Just a few months ago, Daniels used a massive mobilization of city police to suppress the 37-day sit-in that was boldly fighting for three powerful, anti-racist demands:

- Stop the administration's plan for Hopkins to have its own private armed police force.
- Stop the University's complicity with ICE. Specifically, end university contracts funded with millions of dollars from ICE, to train medics, without whom many viciously anti-immigrant ICE activities cannot be conducted.
- Support accountability regarding the cops who murdered Tyrone West.

Ever since the very beginning of the sit-in, protestors at West Wednesday have included Hopkins students, and they know, all too well, that Daniels is definitely not our friend.

Plank, misleader # 2

Kevin Plank is the other organizer of the newspaper statement against Trump's racist remarks about Baltimore. Plank is the CEO of Under Armour, which is headquartered in Baltimore, and participates in racism globally. Virtually all of Under Armour's products are made by third-party manufacturers in some 15 countries, with about 60% of the company's products made under sweatshop conditions in China, Jordan, Vietnam, and Malaysia (Capital Gazette, 2/11/17).

In Baltimore, Plank – who is one of Maryland's richest men–is developing a large new section of the city known as Port Covington, which will include offices, shops, apartments, and the new headquarters for Under Armour, all on a long waterfront expanse, a plan that profits from the crumbling conditions of predominately Black working class neighborhoods.

When Daniels and Plank were named, during the Party member's speech, there were loud boo's for each of those men, from participants at West Wednesday. It was therefore easy for the PLP speaker to stress that the liberal, anti-racist & anti-Trump mask worn by these two capitalist organizers – Daniels and Plank – must be ripped off, for they, even more than Trump, directly exploit and oppress the workers and students of Baltimore. At one point, the speaker said, "The liberal businessmen like Plank, and the liberal education leaders like Daniels, in a certain sense are more dangerous than the right-wingers like Trump because they fool us, and therefore can get away with more horrible realities."

In response, one of the students who had boldly participated in the sit-in, called out, "That's right! That's dope."

Much the same can be said about the upcoming U.S. presidential election. Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and other liberal politicians will not lead us to an anti-racist future, despite their posturing. Perhaps even more effectively than Trump and the Republicans, liberal politicians will lead us to more intense racist exploitation and world war. They will attempt to rally the multi-racial working class of the U.S. into a nationalist force to defend U.S. imperialism, as its empire sinks in relation to that of its imperialist competitors, like China.

The event ended with an invitation to attend the CHALLENGE discussion group, right after the rally, once each month. PLP members in Baltimore vow to continue to raise communist politics in these bold anti-racist actions one CHALLENGE at a time. This action is affectionately known as C-DAWWG (Challenge Discussion After West Wednesday Group). This November we will celebrate our one-year anniversary with perhaps some cake and commitment to analyze and change the world.

The only way out of the false choice between liberal and conservative bosses is to build a mass movement to fight them both, and ultimately get rid of them and their racist system altogether with revolution and communist workers power!✪

Mexico: Communist educators sow seeds of revolution

OAXACA, MEXICO–Last weekend, members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) participated in a forum with a huge group of teachers of Section 22 from Oaxaca of the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE, its initials in Spanish) about PLP's dialectical materialist analysis concerning education, imperialism and the working class alternative.

A group of comrades presented the party's assessment that the greatest threat confronting the world's working class is the big fascists of the liberal US financial wing of the ruling class. The role of the López Obrador government was also discussed. They showed that the imperialist and Mexican capitalists plan to carry out their megaprojects in the south of the country with the mask of this democratic and popular government. Finally, we talked about the importance of teachers having an active role in organizing and raising awareness of the communities where they work to change the system in which we live.

Teachers expressed the commitment and difficulties they face in giving a better educational alternative to their students and their communities

through the Plan for the Transformation of Education in Oaxaca (PTEO) that is promoted by our union section against the employers' plans. One teacher acknowledged that the effort they have made for 35 years has not been enough and that they must prepare for a long struggle; this reflects their understanding and confidence that their class will get involved in a long-term struggle.Another teacher said that education is related to politics and that changing education means changing the system. This understanding has emerged from the union struggle, but also from the effort that our party has made to expand the political boundaries of the immediate union struggle towards a more revolutionary struggle.

One of the teacher comrades invited the teachers to read and distribute our Challenge newspaper, participate in our study circles and join the PLP. The forum was inspiring and represents the potential of our class to lift the flag of communist revolution; they understand that it will not be a quick or simple process.✪

Fight like Flint, Smash Capitalism

Continued from page 3

were holding down the line. They gladly shared their experiences as working people with PLP.

The workers explained that the Bolingbrook plant is in fact a parts distribution center, which receives, packs, and ships replacement parts used in GM vehicles. There are roughly 80 workers, but most are under a "temporary" status, meaning that they don't receive the same pay or benefits that more permanent workers receive. This divisive two-tier wage system is a major source of profits for the bosses, and is a main point of struggle that led up to the current strike.

The workers also shared horror stories of the work conditions inside this plant and others where they had worked. The work was described as very repetitive and physically demanding.

Multiracial solidarity

As one Black woman worker explained, "We're working like slaves. People run around in there like chickens with their heads cut off."

Another white worker stated, "I have two fake hips and carpal tunnel. I hope to make it to retirement in four years."

This white worker actually did not work at the Bolingbrook plant, but came from another auto plant that was represented by the same United Automobile Workers (UAW) union. He understood the importance of workers showing solidarity, as he and his family had been forced to relocate to the Midwest after the bosses closed down the plant where he was employed in New York. Multiple workers in fact travelled from different plants and unions to support the picket on this day.

PL'ers and workers had conversations about the traps that the capitalist bosses use to divide the working class, including race, nationality, sex, and job status. The international working class is

the force that creates all value. We are capable of organizing our class to meet our own collective needs. Everyone on the picket line took a copy of CHALLENGE.

Liberals mislead

Some workers were blatant about voicing their dissatisfaction with the UAW, and for good reason. The union leadership is notoriously corrupt, with a number of officials being caught accepting bribes from the auto bosses in 2017. Both current UAW president Gary Jones as well as former president Dennis Williams have both had their home raided by authorities looking for evidence (Detroit Free Press, 9/18).

Let's consider the role of the union during the government bailout of GM, after the company filed for bankruptcy in 2009 following the financial crash. In exchange for some $50 billion in taxpayer money, the liberal U.S. President Barack Obama and his administration got the union to forfeit the right to strike through 2015, and give up automatic pay raises (Politifact, 9/6/12). Obama bailed out the bosses and hurt the workers. These concessions set the stage for the weakened position that auto workers find themselves today.

Fight like Flint, fight for communism

Undoubtedly the most successful autoworkers' struggle in the U.S. was the 1936-7 sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan. During that struggle, thousands of workers, under the leadership of communists organizing within the UAW, occupied the factory and fought off the bosses for 44 straight days to win their demands (see CHALLENGE, 12/22/18). Autoworkers, fighters, and PL members should study the Flint strike to draw important lessons from it.

The biggest lesson here is this—to guarantee a decent life for our class, we can't limit ourselves to shutting the system down for a day, a week, or even a year. We also can't sell ourselves short by just accepting what crumbs the liberal politicians give in order to use us for their wars.

We need to do away with capitalism entirely, along with all its unemployment, racism, sexism, deportations, and war. PLP is that revolutionary force that unites workers' struggles all over the world into a mass movement for communism! Join us!✪

Strike on against fascists; goal: communism

SEATTLE, WA—Some vermin from the racist, nationalist group, the Proud Boys, confronted and attacked some anti-racist fans before a Major League Soccer (MLS) match in Seattle. The racists were responding to other anti-racist fans flying an anti-fascist, anti-Nazi flag at a previous game. Similar taunting and assaults have been taking place at soccer matches and clubs in New York (HuffPost, 3/9).

While ignoring the Proud Boys and their racist violence, the MLS bosses have instead put a league-wide ban against all political banners and signs at matches. Through this decision, they are effectively equating anti-racist politics with fascist hate speech, as both "extremist ideologies." They are in fact giving a nod of approval to racism and fascism.

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) is involved in this struggle to carry on the communist tradition of organizing workers to crush racist and fascist garbage on the spot and to build a revolutionary movement to get rid of the capitalist system that breeds this garbage!

Anti-racists take action, defy league bosses

The anti-racist fans of MLS teams in a number of cities wasted no time in organizing a militant united response against both the fascist thugs and the MLS bosses. Portland and Seattle team fans came together during a game to protest against fascism. They started the game with 33 minutes of complete silence. The 33 minutes was to mark 1933, the year when the Nazi Party took power in Germany and immediately banned the iron front anti-fascist symbol. After the silence, the fans played Bella Ciao, an anti-fascist song written by Italian partisans during World War II, for the rest of the first half.

Similarly, fans from the Chicago Fire team travelled to a game in Portland to show solidarity and support against the fascists. In defiance of the league ban, they flew anti-fascist flags from their seats in the stands and were thrown out from the game. Other fans have passed out leaflets in front of stadiums about the struggle. An MLS supporter group in which a PLP comrade is active is developing a petition to gather support from other community organizations, such as churches and schools, for the anti-fascist protests. In the face of threats and suspensions from MLS, working-class fans are keeping up the fight and members of PLP must be there pointing the fight towards workers taking power and running all of society! That's communism.

Fascists fear the red flag most

But the iron front symbol (three arrows pointing down and to the left) reveals the contradictions in the anti-fascist movement. In 1930s Germany the Social Democrats used it to oppose monarchists, fascists and communists. Today it is used by the antifa (anti-fascist) movement and has been adopted by anti-fascist soccer fans. But a blogger on the website of the Portland Timber soccer team says "This simple symbol represents opposition to the three most prominent forms of totalitarian government: fascism, monarchy and communism" (timbersarmy.org, 9,9). This is a distortion of history. It is communists all over the world who have always led the fight against fascism. That includes the Italian partisans who sang Bella Ciao.

After the Iron Front was banned in Germany in 1933, it was communists who led the overwhelming bulk of the fight against the Nazis and other fascists in the years leading up to and during the Second World War. Mostly under the leadership of the communist Soviet Union, millions of ordinary workers and peasants were trained and fought as partisans in occupied countries across Europe, an essential complement to the heroic Red Army fighting the Nazi Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front.

The Nazis and the Italian fascists were defeated by millions of workers mostly led by communists. Today we salute the thousands of soccer fans protesting against fascism. But anti-communism and the anarchistic tendency of the antifa movement are losing strategies. Then as now, the red communist flag of the international working class represents the sharpest fight against racism and fascism. Only a mass PLP can organize the workers of the world into a movement for communist revolution that destroys capitalism and the racism and fascism that it breeds.

Take a stand, fight for revolution

Capitalism affects all dimensions of our everyday life, including sports. To say that sports can be "neutral" or should be free from politics just flies in the face of reality, as these events are already soaked in the capitalist bosses' politics. This can be seen by games that start with national anthems, or salute to the imperialist war machine, or display sexist images and shallow consumerism.

As the crisis of capitalism gets worse around the world, comrades from PLP and other anti-racist fighters will need to continue to build the fight that not only denies free speech to racists, but that also attacks the racist capitalist bosses that protect and condone them. Fighting for communist revolution remains the only way to wipe racism and fascism from the face of the earth! From the stands to the streets to the schools, wave the red flag of communism!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Notes from students about the climate march

For the Department of Education sanctioned climate march, four sophomore students at my school attended the rally. Here are some of their observations:

- Zaire: "It was cool. I learned more about socialism. My dad says he is a socialist. My mom didn't really know much about climate change until I started talking to her about it.
- Martin: "I was not impressed. There weren't many radical ideas. Also, very few cops.
- Ariana: "There were a lot of white kids there but I am glad I went. The principal said that she wouldn't count it as a community service activity which I don't understand why."

These students attend a highly segregated school with nearly all Black and Latin students who hail from the Caribbean and Central America. When I asked Zaire what causes climate change, she immediately said, "Capitalism."

Many teenagers understand the systemic cause behind the catastrophe that is climate change. When I asked Zaire what she thinks we could do about it, she talked about her project: recycling plastic bags into bracelets. This revealed two things: 1) The blame and burden for climate change is put on the group that contributes the *least* to climate change. The capitalist class and their drive for money and power are what destroy the planet. 2) The mere innovation of young people goes to show that our class does hold the potential to solve this world's problems. What we need is a better understanding of how capitalism works.

Martin, the most thoughtful of the three, criticized the march for its vapid political content. However, he also identifies himself as an anarchist who doesn't have qualms about individual violence. Sometimes, I am talking him down from getting into altercations with authorities and police. He perceives them as oppressors. As he should. While Martin has more reasons than anyone to hate the system, any time he independently "takes matters into his own hands," it will work against him.

Both Martin and Ariana's remarks about the lack of police presence and the predominantly white character of the march reveals how pro-democratic and pro-capitalist this climate march actually is. The Democratic Party is trying to recruit the next generation of apologists for this U.S. Empire.

These young people, much like their adult working-class counterparts, are full of complex contradictions that I am still learning to grasp. The one thing I do understand is that students like these can run a communist world better than the best that capitalism can offer.

★★★★★

The problem for climate activists

Capitalism is proving once again it can handle world criticism by millions in the recent 'strike' for climate change. They can allow worldwide mass marches involving millions of honest workers, like the ones we saw on Friday, September 20

without giving up any power or profits. Capitalist rulers have weathered similar mass movements from Civil Rights to the hundreds of millions opposed to nuclear war without any real loss of power or superprofits from it's racism, inequality, endless wars or climate destruction.

Political leaders today pay lip service to the climate change danger and say that action is needed. But then they all say that political action is the art of the possible, meaning voting. That really means impossible, because all politicians are bought by the capitalists.

The unspeakable truth is that what capitalists fear the most is the vast working class of the world, which these capitalists are terrorizing and destroying. The working class has historically proven it has the power to end the capitalist profit system with communist revolution. Capitalist rulers have geared all branches of their system to outlaw any discussion of working class power and revolution, which today is represented by the communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP), and it's CHALLENGE newspaper.

Organizers against climate change condemn the politicians, but if they do not investigate and break their own links to capitalist power, privilege and profits, their movement will join all the others that have failed. Capitalist recession and war are on the horizon and organizers must choose between working class or capitalist interests and what kind of world they want to live in. Organizers for the working class can join PLP study groups, bring lots of CHALLENGE newspapers to rallies and grab the mic in their neighborhoods to declare that a world free of racism, sexism, inequality and wars is possible by joining PLP's fight for communist revolution.

★★★★★

Haitian migrants in the Bahamas

The recent Progressive Labor Party cadre school in Haiti began with an article about migration and class struggle, pointing out some of the reasons that workers are forced by capitalism to migrate from their home countries—search for work, escape from war and violence, escape from the poverty caused by climate change.

Hurricane Dorian, which just devastated part of the Bahamas, is a good example. Extreme weather conditions led Dorian to rest over two of the Bahama islands for an extended period. As of Sept. 7, 70,000 people were left homeless, and over 6,000 people are still unaccounted for. Many of them are Haitian migrants or Haitian-Bahamians (MSNBC).

One of the hardest hit islands, Abaco, is home to large numbers of Haitian migrants, who according to all news accounts, live in the most abject poverty. Haiti produces more unemployed workers than anything else, and when they migrate, they are forced to fill the lowest-paying jobs.

Haitians began migrating to the Bahamas in the late 1950s, escaping the Duvalier dictatorship. Since then, many others have followed, seeking work when there was none in Haiti, and seeking refuge from political upheavals and state-sponsored violence. However, there is no paradise here: most Haitians are undocumented, and children born in the Bahamas of "foreign" parents are not given citizenship at birth and have to wait until they are 18 to apply for it themselves. In addition, whenever the Bahamian bosses confront crises at home, they blame Haitian migrants. This is accompanied by periodic mass deportations (including children born in the Bahamas). This foments racist and nationalist anger by Bahamian workers and others who should be allies in their common struggle against the bosses.

Now would be as good a time as any for Bahamian workers to unite with Haitian migrants and fight back against the corrupt, capitalist system that has so badly managed the recovery from the effects of the storm—e.g., lack of clean water, food, shelter, etc. The Bahamian bosses have been quick to note that the "tourist resort islands" are up and running and that travelers should come down and visit, and put more money into the bosses' hands while the workers suffer.

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Elections, opportunity for struggle

Although still well more than a year away, the 2020 U.S. presidential election is heating up. The hype has been on-going since a few months after the mid-term congressional elections. As communists, we care about elections, but not because we want workers to vote. We don't vote, but that doesn't mean we sit out elections. We join the electoral political battles to convince workers to fight for the international working class.

U.S.-style democracies depend on the illusion that voting matters. To keep this illusion strong in the minds of workers, the capitalist bosses promote the importance of elections. Once new political hacks of the bourgeois (bosses) are elected, workers are encouraged to go back to work. Important decisions will be made for them.

Under capitalism, workers do not hold state power. The agents elected (mayors, governors and even presidents) act as representatives of the bourgeois class. They act in the interests of the industrialists, like those who run companies like Exxon Mobil, Chase Bank, Boeing, etc. Workers often don't vote. Of eligible voters only 25 percent voted for Trump.

Capitalist schools do not teach us that political power is generally held through the threat of violence. When workers strike, they are often met by security guards, then police, and finally national guardsmen. When workers rebel, governors will call out state guardsmen and the President may even call out soldiers (Newark, Detroit, Los Angeles, Harlem,...). The primary job of police and military forces is to control workers and students, not to help them with their grievances. The armed forces are controlled by the mayors, governors and presidents who represent the bourgeois class. Only through communism can workers gain power and run society.

Our party has been involved in presidential elections and we should continue to do so. Not because we believe in a candidate (Bernie, Elizabeth Warren, Mayor Pete, …) or a candidate's claims (student loan forgiveness, a more efficient military, closing tax loopholes,...), but because elections involve workers who are interested in politics. The Democrats, Democratic Socialists, Greens, and Republicans all have organizing groups for supporting their candidates. In those groups there are workers thinking about and questioning the whole political system. These workers can become open to our understanding of the world. It is our duty to meet and work with students and workers who desire a better world. We believe many workers can see through the lies of politicians, media hacks, union misleaders and all of the bosses' flunkies. Workers can become communists and collectively run the world.

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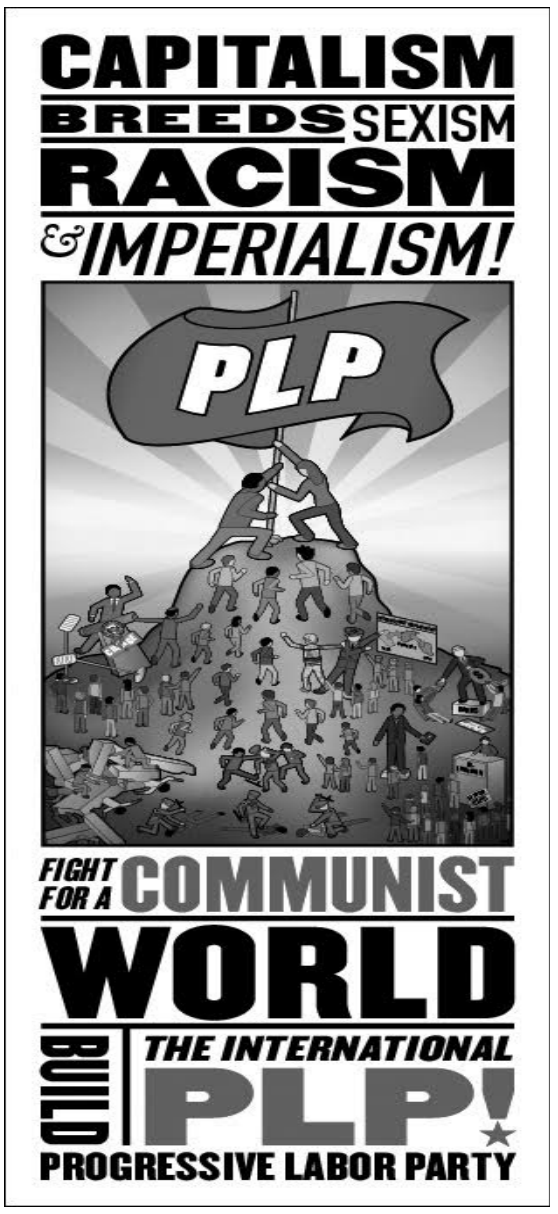

CORRECTION

In the 9/25 article "Auto workers against racism," there were actually no auto workers in the United Auto Workers union march. This section evidently represents writers. Additionally, the use of the possessive pronoun "our" was intended to refer to the mass organizers, not PL leaders as the article had incorrectly implied.

Protest teaches about limits and confidence in workers

INDIANA, SEPTEMBER 25—Putting our line of revolutionary communism on the line with fellow workers, no matter how big or small the fight, is the only way Progressive Labor Party can build for communism in this dark period of capitalism. PLP along with the family of workers murdered by kkkops and mass organization members, held a daylong rally for justice here. What started off as a potentially isolating action, turned into a school for communist leadership.

A previous article reported on the actions of PLP and families who lost loved ones via murders-by-cops (CHALLENGE, 9/11). PLP had also connected the dots of racism from deportations to police terror. All of this has been happening among economic devastation, and political and educational disinvestment in the same working-class city.

Workers embrace politics

Protesters gathered with their signs and photos of the murdered in front of a local baseball stadium along an intersection. Few passersby were around. So, the crowd moved down the road to a high school where a reunion happened to be taking place.

Alumni were gathered in the high school parking lot. The school had been closed for 11 years. The busted out windows, graffiti, and disrepair of the school and surrounding neighborhood provided the visual reminder of why PLP builds in this community. A battle-tested comrade, who also lived and worked in this city years earlier, said this was where the Party needed to be. When re-

union organizers learned about the Party and why we were there, they gladly welcomed us into the event.

We talked to workers of all ages who told stories about the school and neighborhood. They were receptive to CHALLENGE and conversations about racist police and other conditions under capitalism. Some gave a donation for the paper and offered supportive words to people among us grieving, but still fighting.

Push the limits of what is possible

When we returned to the baseball stadium with signs, a bullhorn, and CHALLENGE, fans of the team were beginning to stream in for the game. Most of the crowd did not live in the city. Like many capitalist investments in working-class cities, the ballpark was not built to benefit residents.

The reception from this group was different from the workers at the school reunion. While many people did not take CHALLENGE, veteran PL members insisted on continuing to spread our ideas. The security guard threatened us with removal and arrest. One veteran PL'er responded by calling attention to the despicable conditions of the city.

"They [workers] need our line here, they need CHALLENGE!" So, we continued to sell CHALLENGE and talk to workers with a little pushback. This reinforced a valuable lesson about pushing the limits.

One of the biggest battles we'll fight is the one against ourselves; the rest of the working class knows this system means murder and death for them. We know that it will take communist revolution led by our Party, with many other workers joining and fighting to defeat it!✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from the capitalist press that may be of use for our readers.
NYT=New York Times
GW= Guardian Weekly

Rich get richer and poor die sooner

NYT, 9/11 — The expanding gap between rich and poor is not only widening the gulf in incomes and wealth in America. It is helping the rich lead longer lives, while cutting short the lives of those who are struggling, according to a study…by the Government Accountability Office.

Almost three-quarters of rich Americans who were in their 50s and 60s in 1992 made it to 2014….

"Poverty is a life-threatening issue for millions of people in this country and this report confirms it…."The poorest…40 percent of women actually have lower life expectancies than their mothers did…. "a whole generation will be condemned to early death."

Strike vs. GM and its $35 billion profit

NYT, 9/17 — A decade ago when General Motors was on the brink of collapse and was ushered into bankruptcy…the company's unionized workers bore a significant portion of the pain to bring the automaker back to financial health.

The United Auto Workers agreed to allow General Motors to hire a significant number of new workers at roughly half the hourly wage of those already on the payroll and with reduced retirement benefits….GM was able to bring in temporary workers with even slimmer wage-and-benefit packages and little job security.

Now nearly 50,000 workers…[are] striking to get what they see as their fair share of the company's hefty returns and block further erosion of their ranks."We have given away so many concessions over the last eight-plus years, and this company has been ridiculously profitable,…" said Chaz Akers, 24, an assembler at GM's Detroit-Hamtramck plant, which is set to close in January….We're fighting to get everything that we lost back…."

The automaker…has made $35 billion in North America over the last three years — while closing plants in the United States….[Meanwhile Obama's] federal government rescued the company in 2009."We literally gave up a lot during the bankruptcy and the American taxpayer gave up a lot," said Ashley Scales, 32, a GM worker walking the picket line…. "We gave up twice because we pay taxes and we gave up in the contractual agreement. And now the corporation is making more profit than ever and they still want to play games…."It has closed a small-car plant in Lordstown, Ohio, and component plants in Baltimore and Warren, Mich….

…The biggest issue for strikers is the tiered wage system, which leaves some workers making significantly less than others for comparable work….Those hired after [2007] (now more than a third of the work force) start at about $17 an hour….

In addition, GM uses temporary workers (about 7 percent of the staff) who earn about $15 an hour….

Mr. Akers said he was paid $18 an hour for installing passenger-side headlights, while the driver-side headlights were installed by a temporary worker making $3 less.

"That guy has been a temp for two and a half years," Mr. Akers said. "Is that temporary to you?"

Paris: transit strikers warn Macron, "No pension cuts!"

NYT, 9/10 — Paris…faced…the biggest public transportation strike in nearly 13 years — a warning shot at President Macron's government over its ambitious pension overhaul plan.

Ten out of 14 metro lines were shut,…key hubs like the stations at Opéra and Montparnasse were closed….Only one-third of the city's buses were operating….For a public transport system considered one of the world's best and most efficient…it was a historic shutdown….an early warning that the pension overhaul envisioned by Mr. Macron could be in for some rough sailing….Mr. Macron….wants to do away with the special plans that prevail in professions considered difficult, like the Paris metro, where workers spend hours beneath the streets….

"We work in…schedules and times that are difficult," said [Jean Delprat, a union representative]….We work most weekends, New Year's, Christmas. The guy finishes at 2 in the morning…. We've accepted these difficulties….But we have certain compensations to make up for it.""These are not advantages," he said of lower retirement ages. These are compensations…."Nour El Hadri, a film producer….[said] "People don't strike for nothing….They're defending their interests. Everyone has the right."

Slavery still going in the U.S.

NYT, 9/13 — …A California-based ministry… lured homeless people into forced labor with the false promise that they would be provided meals and shelter….Instead…they were imprisoned in group homes and coerced to forgo welfare benefits and panhandle up to nine hours a day, six days a week for the financial benefit of the church leaders…..[An] indictment "alleges an appalling abuse of power by church officials who preyed on vulnerable homeless people with promises of a warm bed and meals. These victims were held captive, stripped of their humble financial means, their identification, their freedom and their dignity…."

Some of the victims — most of whom were homeless — were ordered to "fundraise" on the streets for hours at a time handing out religious brochures and Pixy Sticks in exchange for money.

In some cases, victims agreed to give up to 40 percent of their monthly government food allowances to pay for expenses. But…church leaders took all of it….If they resisted or said they would leave, leaders threatened to take away their children….Others were forced to hand over personal property, passports and immigration papers to ensure they would not leave…..

The money was partly used to pay for the expansion of Imperial Valley Ministries.

Rising fascism:
Liberal bosses use climate reform to squash domestic rival

On September 20, as millions around the world marched to protest climate change, the big oil and auto capitalists behind the movement were calling for stricter regulations—on themselves. A hallmark of fascism is the ruling class disciplining itself and squashing enemies within its own ranks. The call for self-regulation in oil and auto is a not-so-early warning sign. The big liberal U.S. imperialist bosses are accelerating toward fascism as they prepare for war and sharper attacks on the international working class.

The tension between capitalist camps in the U.S. is growing more and more volatile. The liberal finance capitalists, the big fascists, are being pressed on all sides—at home by the little fascists backing Trump, and around the globe by the Chinese and Russian capitalist bosses. The liberal bosses' response is to push for regulation and to build mass movements like the climate movement under a patriotic umbrella. For workers, following these liberal rulers will be disastrous. Our only path is to turn their drive toward war and fascism into a battle for workers' power—into communist revolution.

Split in oil industry

The split in the U.S. ruling class is dramatically reflected within the oil industry. The big oil companies have formed the backbone of U.S. imperialism for the last 150 years. They were originally dominated by the Rockefeller family and Standard Oil, which monopolized oil refining and distribution in the U.S. until 1911, when it was broken up into 34 smaller companies, including Exxon, Mobil, and Chevron—an early example of the U.S. ruling class disciplining its own. As oil replaced coal as the capitalists' energy source of choice, the booming industry wrote or ignored the rules, contaminating the skies and rivers. But now the multinational oil "majors" are fighting off challengers within the U.S. and the ascendant Chinese capitalists. In the face of attacks from within and without, they have embraced regulations that add to their competitive advantage over the smaller, domestically oriented energy capitalists, as represented by the Koch family and fronted by President Donald Trump. As Time Magazine (8/29) noted:

> *The oil-and-gas industry was split on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) methane rules [under Barack Obama], with some prominent companies supporting them and many smaller producers pushing for their elimination. The EPA's decision [under Trump] to side with a group of smaller fossil-fuel firms shows the influence these obscure companies retain within the Trump Administration—and the power they have to slow climate legislation...The split within the industry is partly a matter of scale. The EPA regulation—which required oil producers to implement a range of measures to stop natural gas leaks at new drilling sites, keeping methane from entering the atmosphere—posed little threat to big oil-and-gas firms, which could easily absorb the compliance costs necessitated by the 2016 rule.*

Auto bosses conspire against Trump

As the big oil bosses push regulation and environmentalism to crush their domestic rivals, the big auto bosses have opened up their own front against Trump and his little fascist backers, including the Kochs, whose empire relies on the refining and distribution of petroleum products within the U.S. Along with three foreign auto makers (Volkswagen, Honda, and BMW), Ford conspired against the White House to hold to stricter emissions standards, in defiance of Trump's rollback of Obama-era regulations.

While the auto bosses were plotting against Trump:

> *[f]ormer members of Trump's transition teams … sent a letter to the President… advising him to ignore the car companies and roll back the standards.…The letter was signed by Tom Pyle of the Institute for Energy Research (IER), Myron Ebell of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and Shirley Ybarra, a former fellow at the Reason Foundation. All three organizations have close Koch ties, and Pyle was himself a lobbyist for Koch Industries (desmog.com).*

Dueling political movements

The bosses' factions are building dueling political movements to mobilize the working class. The small, Koch-led oil bosses are rallying millions around open KKK racists of the Trump-led Republican Party. The big oil bosses, now almost entirely concentrated in the Democratic Party, are funding a variety of liberal reformist mass organizations, including the pro-regulation environmental movement:

> *"The world's biggest energy firms have rallied around a carbon tax as a climate measure … committing millions [of dollars] to lobby for such a policy"(Time, 8/29).*

For the big fascists, the environmental movement's value has nothing to do with cleaning up the earth. It is solely a way to mislead millions of workers to enlist in the bosses' dog fight—and to undermine class struggle as the rulers move society into global war and open fascism. Boss-led movements can never liberate our class. They can never build a society to serve the interests of the great masses of people. Only building Progressive Labor Party and fighting for communism can do that.✪

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